

OREGON DAILY EMERALD

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The Hearings Missed the Mark

The Student Union Board proved little or nothing in the hearings it held last week, which were supposedly an airing of ideas for its improvement.

Objections have been raised—and justifiably so—that the Board is not truly carrying out the wishes of the students, who support it financially. The Board's decisions on the Lobby last year and their poor handling of the Terrace problem this year would justify that assertion.

And representation on the Board hasn't been as it should be: one school had two representatives for 7,000 students—or one for 3,500 students—another had one for about 500, another has one for about 160. It doesn't really make sense.

But the crucial question is student control over the Board's actions, and the Board only paid lip service during the hearings. We wonder why.

It's been proposed that the Board's decisions be subject to review by the ASUO Senate, the only student-elected body on the campus. This would probably be the fairest and most efficient method of making sure the Board was acting in the students' interests. That way, those who had the greatest expertise in the administrative problems involved would be in a position to take care of them, and, at the same time, the student body could check the board whenever it went too far—like refusing to let students use the Terrace.

That's only right. The Student Union was built for the students' use, and any policy which prevents that should be eliminated.

But the Board, in its "compromise" of proposals given last Thursday at the hearings, didn't deal with that problem. Instead, they decided to "guarantee the ASUO four positions" on the Board—which could mean anything, as it's worded now. According to Chairman Dick Lawrence, the Board would present proposals to the Senate whenever they feel that a review by that body is necessary.

In other words, when they just happen to feel like it. They could simply use this

device as a token demonstration of acquiescence to the student body that really didn't exist. The student body still wouldn't have the control they rightfully deserve—the Board would simply eat humble pie once in a while when it didn't really matter, and hope the students believed it.

So we're a bit cynical about the three afternoons of dialogue that the Board conducted last week. It almost seemed as if the Board was merely out to beat to the punch the growing dissatisfaction with its policies.

What they've come up with doesn't really solve the problem.

Open the Meetings

The general faculty will meet today to act on an ASUO Senate proposal to allow two students to attend faculty meetings, one of the students being the ASUO president.

As we have said before we feel this is a reasonable and moderate request of the faculty, and is a step toward better student-faculty relations. The newly-formed Faculty-Student Council has endorsed the idea, and we hope the full faculty does the same.

While this would be a step in the right direction we would, of course, be much happier if the faculty went a step further and opened their meetings to everyone, including the press. There is very little that should have to go on behind closed doors, and any secret matters could be dealt with in an executive session. Faculty action to open up the meetings would not deprive the body of the power to close those meetings off at any time it wished. Martin Acker, associate professor of education, made a good point in the Council meeting Monday—if the faculty wants students to demonstrate responsibility, then students must be given the opportunity to do so. Unnecessary restrictions will do nothing but hamper this opportunity.

Free, open discussion of faculty action will do much to insure an aware and responsible student body. Open meetings should be given a trial.

Phil Semas

Students Should Be Heard, Too

Max Rafferty, California's conservative superintendent of public instruction, lit into the new generation of protesting students the other day in a column in the Los Angeles Times.

Much of what Rafferty said isn't even worth commenting on. It was mostly ravings against the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley and "the illegitimate progeny" across the country which followed it.

One section is most bothersome, however.

Says Rafferty:

"Our college students . . . ought to be able to understand . . . that the purpose of an institution of higher learning is not to afford them a built-in public address system and a captive audience.

"It is to make them learned. It is to teach them to pursue the truth and to recognize it when and if they catch up with it. It is to hand from one generation to the next the intellectual artifacts which are the rungs of the great ladder leading us over the centuries from savagery to civilization."

"Students are in school to learn, not to instruct—to listen, not to shoot their mouths off. When they have become at least partially educated, they may be worth listening to by the rest of us. Until that time, quite frankly, they are not."

In other words, Rafferty is saying that students are second-class citizens, that they can have no new ideas, that they should "be seen and not heard."

EDUCATION'S NOT THAT GOOD

That would be fine if the educational system were all that it should be, if it really did make us "learned," whatever that means, if it really did teach us to "pursue truth and to recognize it when and if (we) catch it."

The trouble is that too much of modern education is devoted to talking about "intellectual artifacts." Higher education does not force students to think. It only has them learning enough facts to regurgitate on a test well enough to earn a grade. Then those facts are quickly forgotten. You have to learn facts but you also have to learn what to do with them. That's what's been left out of higher education.

Sure, it's partly the students' fault. Too many students don't make an effort to change the system and only a few more go ahead and do some real thinking.

But then why should they? The system does nothing to encourage it. You can get by in the system, go all the way through college and get your degree with fairly decent grades—without ever having uttered anything but regurgitation of subject matter.

STUDENTS UNSURE

Students are so unused to having to do anything more than this that when they are confronted with a course that does challenge them, they don't know what to do. More than one professor can tell of how he has developed a program that really forces students to do some independent thinking, only to find that the students complain because there's not enough guidance in the course.

Unfortunately faculty members who develop courses that really challenge are too few, and so are students who ask for this kind of course.

Most students don't care about the kind of education they're getting. Most students are passive. They only want to live within the system as it stands because they aren't asked to do anything else.

There are some, of course, who aren't like this. They're the kind that Rafferty is attacking, the ones who question the system and challenge the faculty to change it so that higher education can have some meaning for students.

NUMBER GROWING

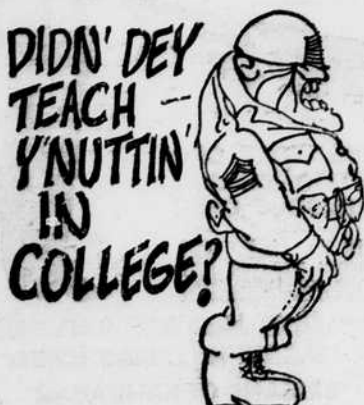
As can be seen on this campus, their number is growing. More and more students are finding that they don't like the lecture and test system that encourages regurgitation and discourages thinking.

And they run into the attacks of people like Rafferty. What people like Rafferty fail to realize is that few academicians want to change higher education. They like it the way it is.

Take this University. You don't hear many faculty members

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Jules Feiffer



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